



Santa Rosa Junior College ~ International Student Admissions  
**F-1 Student Optional Practical Training**  
(Off-campus employment)

Optional Practical Training (O.P.T.) is a benefit of the F-1 Student Visa status that allows students to work temporarily in the United States, usually after the completion of a degree. Students are able to gain practical work experience in their field of study. Students must have been enrolled full time for one full year before applying for OPT. There are two types of OPT work permission, and different rules apply to each category:

**Pre-Completion OPT:**

If you have not completed your degree or certificate, you are limited to **part time** work permission (20 hours per week). You must continue to maintain full time status (12 units) while working. Work must be directly related to your major.

**Post-Completion OPT:**

If you have completed your degree, you are eligible for 12 months of **full time** work permission (40 hours per week). Work must be directly related to your major. You are not required to enroll in classes during this time. All employment must be **completed within 14 months** of completion of your studies.

You must apply to the *U.S. Citizenship & Immigration Services* (US CIS) for OPT permission. If your request is approved, you will receive an Employment Authorization Document, or **EAD** card.

## Regulations

- You must submit your request for OPT no later than 60 days after completing your degree.
- No offer of employment is required to apply, but you are expected to be seeking employment.
- You must receive an *Employment Authorization Document* (EAD Card) before you can begin working.
- While you are working, **you are required to keep in regular contact with the International Admissions Office**. You must notify us: 1) of any change of address, 2) the name and address of your employer, 3) if you change employers 4) stop working, or 5) you intend to travel outside the US. We are required to report this information to US CIS while you are on OPT.
- Your status while on OPT is dependent on employment. If you are unemployed more than 90 days, your status and OPT permission will be terminated and you will be required to leave the United States.
- You are authorized to work only for the dates listed on the EAD card. Working beyond the end date is a violation of your status.

## Application Instructions:

Processing time is approximately 3 months. You will need to complete and assemble the following items:

- Complete **form I-765**, *Application for Employment Authorization*. This form is available online at: <http://www.uscis.gov/portal/site/uscis> Click on "Forms", then click on "I-765- Application for Employment Authorization" to print out the form and instructions. Question #16 on the I-765 form should be marked **(c)(3)(B)** for post-completion (full time) OPT, or **(c)(3)(A)** for pre-completion OPT.
- Obtain two "passport style" color photographs. Photo size requirements are noted on the instructions (no larger than 2x2). Write name and admission number in pencil on back of photos. Place photos in a small envelope, so they do not get lost or damaged.
- Write a cover letter to U.S. C.I.S. mentioning that all documents are included. Request that the EAD be mailed directly to you to avoid delays. Include your home address.
- Application fee of \$380.00.
- Make your check or money order payable to *Department of Homeland Security*.
- Bring a copy of your Passport and I-94 to our office.

- The US CIS advises students not to leave the country while waiting to receive their EAD work permission card. Travel is possible once you have received your receipt notice or EAD card from US CIS.

Please bring all documents to the International Student Admissions Office for review and mailing. When you receive your EAD card, please bring it in to our office. We will need to make a copy for our files. We wish you good luck in finding off-campus employment.

### **Important Information:**

- You may change employers, as long as the work continues to relate directly to your major.
- If you travel, you need to have your I-20 signed by us before leaving the country.
- You are eligible for another 12 months of O.P.T. after completing a Bachelor's Degree.
- To check the status of your case online, visit <https://egov.uscis.gov/cris/jsps/index.jsp>
- If you move while your case is pending, please call US CIS Customer Service at 1(800) 375-5283 so that your EAD card will be mailed to your new address.
- Please notify us as soon as you find employment.

Please feel free to contact us if you have questions.

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